

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

- * The house at 197 Main Street is a 2x2-bay, 2 1/2-story, cross-gabled form with Victorian Eclectic style ornament including the gable returns, slim corner pilasters and molded cornice; a 2-story ell expands the plan at the rear; a 1-story gabled ell of 1 bay projects to the south from the rear ell
- * Secondary masses include the south north and side 1-story open porches off the front section of the main block
- * Windows are 2/2 double-hung units with plain trim
- * The side-hall entries are below both open porches and appear to have plain trim
- * 3 brick chimneys rise from the ridge of the main block and additional example from the 1-story south-facing ell
- * The house is well-maintained and has a small parcel in a denser section of the town center

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

see continuation sheets

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners /occupants played within the community.

The Gilson-Bywater House was built between 1832 and 1847 according to Butler's historic maps. The house was occupied from 1846-1849 by the former innkeeper John M. Gilson (1805-1898) who kept a livery stable here. According to Dr. Green, John McKeen Gilson who may be the person represented in several Groton historical documents as John McGilson, McGilson and M. E. Gilson due to a misspelled sign in 1855. Mr. Gilson lived to the age of 98 and was the oldest person in town at the time of his death in 1898. He also owned "The Neck" from 1855-1885, an island in the Nashua River formed by a flood in 1751. He later lived at 78 Old Ayer Road from c. 1860-1889 (MHC #92). A subsequent owner was the Groton native B. F. Hartwell whose name appears at this location on the 1875 and 1889 county atlases and who worked as a joiner or carpenter from 1855-1865 according to the state census. Previous research by the GHC states the house is located on John Nutting's garrison in the 17th century and that he was captured by Native Americans during King Philip's war when all but a handful of buildings in Groton were burned in 1676. Mr. Nutting was killed near the site at that time. The ell of the house was moved here from Pleasant Street and was formerly operated as a livery stable by John M. Gilson. The building also served as the telephone exchange in the early 1900s. In 1921, the house was described on Sanborn maps as a two family residence. The 1930 owner was Thomas E. Bywater, a telephone installer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

continuation sheet

1856 Walling map of Middlesex County; 1875 Beers atlas; 1889 Walker atlas; 1832 and 1847 Butler maps; Butler's 1829 field notes; Federal census agricultural schedules, 1850-1880; Previous GHC Research; 1896, 1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance map; Resident Directories, 1918, 1929; Dr. Green, Chapter IX, p. 26; XIV, p. 32; Vol iv, p. 457; 1930 Somes map; Resident directories, 1918, 1929; 1855, 1865 state census; May, "Houses" p. 145, 61;

**** All properties mentioned in bold type are individually inventoried resources**

- Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement Form.
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INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
Groton

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Massachusetts Archives Building
Boston, MA 02125

Area(s)
Form No.



197 Main Street